

***INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE***  
***February 27 - March 5, 2014***

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**1. [Ukraine to Receive Extensive Assistance Package from U.S. \(03-04-2014\)](#)**

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.  
Staff Writer

Washington — The United States is providing economic assistance to the Ukrainian government — including a \$1 billion energy subsidy package — that is part of a broader international effort to ensure sufficient funding to restore financial stability and a return to prosperity in Ukraine, the White House announced March 4.

“The United States has developed a package of bilateral assistance focused on meeting Ukraine’s most pressing needs and helping Ukraine to enact the reforms needed to make its International Monetary Fund program a success,” the White House said. The IMF has already begun engaging with the new government to help stabilize the Ukrainian economy.

The announcement from the White House came as Secretary of State John Kerry arrived in Kyiv to reinforce Washington’s support for the new Ukrainian government and for crucial security talks with Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk and Acting President Oleksandr Turchynov.

Kerry’s arrival comes as Ukraine struggles with a Russian military takeover of Crimea, a strategic southeast region that borders Russia and the Black Sea. On February 26, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a major military training exercise involving 150,000 troops, hundreds of

tanks and armored vehicles, and dozens of combat aircraft and troop-carrying helicopters just across the border with Crimea, and then on February 27 masked military forces seized the regional parliament and other government buildings in Crimea. President Obama called Russia's military incursion into Crimea a violation of international law and the U.N. Charter.

"I spent the weekend talking to leaders across Europe, and I think the world is largely united in recognizing that the steps Russia has taken are a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty, Ukraine's territorial integrity, that they're a violation of international law. They're a violation of previous agreements that Russia has made with respect to how it treats and respects its neighbors," Obama said at the White House March 3.

"My interest is seeing the Ukrainian people be able to determine their own destiny," Obama added.

Obama talked with Russian President Putin by telephone March 1 for approximately 90 minutes to encourage him to withdraw Russian combat troops from Crimea and engage in diplomatic talks with the new Ukrainian government. Obama told Putin: "Going forward, Russia's continued violation of international law will lead to greater political and economic isolation."

In addition to energy subsidies assistance, the aid package Kerry delivered to Kyiv provides training for financial and election institutions and anti-corruption efforts.

"The IMF will be at the front lines of an international package for Ukraine and is positioned to support robust and market-oriented reforms needed to restore Ukraine to economic health, including via providing large-scale financing and technical support," the White House said in its announcement March 4.

Specifically, the Obama administration is working with the U.S. Congress and the Ukrainian government to provide \$1 billion in loan guarantees aimed at helping insulate vulnerable Ukrainians from the effects of reduced energy subsidies, the White House said.

Treasury Secretary Jack Lew said separately March 4 that the United States is prepared to work with the Ukrainian government and its partners to provide as much support as Ukraine needs to restore financial stability and return to economic growth, if the government is prepared to implement necessary reforms.

"At the request of the Ukrainian government, a mission from the International Monetary Fund is currently in Kyiv working with the Ukrainian authorities," Lew said. "The IMF will be at the center of an international assistance package and is best placed to support Ukraine's implementation of robust and market-oriented reforms. In parallel, the United States is working alongside international partners to assemble a package to help make the IMF program a success."

The United States has developed a package of assistance focused on meeting Ukraine's four most pressing needs: implementing critical economic reforms and cushioning their impact on vulnerable Ukrainians; conducting free, fair and inclusive elections, with robust involvement by a strong and independent civil society and media; combating corruption and recovering stolen assets; and withstanding politically motivated trade actions by Russia, Lew said.

European leaders have begun considering economic sanctions on exports of Russia's natural gas, uranium and coal, according to published news reports. The possibility of U.S. sanctions, which have been mentioned by administration and congressional officials not speaking for attribution, would likely take a similar approach to Europe's.

Meanwhile, the Group of Seven advanced economies — which includes Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — announced March 2 in response to the Russian military invasion of Crimea that it was suspending preparations for the 2014 Group of Eight Summit planned for May 18–19 in Sochi, Russia. Russia is the eighth member of the G8.

At the same time, the United States has suspended talks with Russia over a bilateral trade and investment treaty, and the Pentagon announced March 3 that it was suspending military-to-military engagements between the United States and Russia.

“We call on Russia to de-escalate the crisis in Ukraine and for Russian forces in Crimea to return to their bases, as required under the agreements governing the Russia Black Sea Fleet,” Pentagon press secretary Rear Admiral John Kirby said. He added that the United States has suspended military exercises, bilateral meetings, port visits and planning conferences with its counterparts in the Russian military.

To clarify the U.S. military position, Kirby added that there has been no change in the U.S. military posture or activity in Europe or the Mediterranean Sea and that the U.S. Navy continues to conduct routine, previously planned operations and exercises with allies and partners in the region.

In Brussels March 4, ambassadors from NATO’s 28 member nations prepared to hold a second emergency meeting on Ukraine after Poland, which borders Russia and Ukraine, invoked an article of the North Atlantic Treaty calling for consultations when a member nation regarded its “territorial integrity, political independence or security” as being threatened, according to European news reports.

Related Sites:

[Kerry's Press Briefing in Kyiv, Ukraine](#)

[Treasury Secretary Lew on U.S. Economic Assistance to Ukraine](#)

[White House Fact Sheet on International Support for Ukraine](#)

[Kerry on Iran’s Nuclear Ambitions, Middle East Peace Process](#)

[Kerry, Moldovan Prime Minister on Bilateral Relationship](#)

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## **2. State’s Nuland on Russian Federation’s Statement on Ukraine (03-04-2014)**

*Reply to the Statement of the Russian Federation on Ukraine at the Special Meeting of the Permanent Council*

*Remarks by Victoria Nuland, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs*

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Because Ambassador Kelin’s remarks were intermittently addressed to us, I thought it best to respond immediately to the parallel reality that was presented here to the situation that the vast majority of the rest of the delegations here see in Ukraine.

First and foremost, the assertion that EU nations or the United States “pushed an Association Agreement on Ukraine”: Just to correct the record there, it was President Yanukovich’s own choice to seek association with the European Union. We were at the time supporting the choice of the freely elected government of Ukraine in seeking association with the European Union, but it was very much a European Union project. And it was President Yanukovich who pursued that policy for

six months, including seeking some 18 conforming pieces of legislation approved in the Rada, and only one week before Vilnius stepped back from that. So I don't know how anyone can speak of the United States or anybody else "pushing" that choice on Ukraine.

Second, we were supporters of the February 21st Agreement: We commended the work done by France, Germany and Poland to mediate and negotiate that agreement, with Russia very much in observance, and we would have been prepared to support its completion. But it was President Yanukovich who chose not to sign the first piece of action pursued in the Rada, the changing of the constitution pursuant to the agreement. Not only did he not sign it, but he left the city – he fled the city – packing himself and his family up, and left the seat of the presidency vacant for two days, during which time the democratically elected Rada nearly unanimously voted him out of office, including every single member of his own party turning against him. So, from where we're sitting, there is no way a person who takes those decisions can be considered still the legitimate leader of his country.

Third, the notion that the current government in Kyiv is "illegitimate": Yes, the vast majority of representatives in the government are either from a small handful of political parties or from civil society, many of them having never served in government before, and representing broad constituencies across Ukraine. But that is not because this government does not have broad political support across the spectrum and across the country – in fact, the government was voted in with a very, very broad mandate, including from the Party of Regions, from the independents, from the Communists. However, those parties chose not to accept invitations to participate in government; they've publicly explained that they want to distance themselves from having to clean up the mess that Yanukovich left, and they want to run on their own platforms in the May 25th election. So, it is incorrect and inaccurate to assert that either nations of the West destroyed the February 21st Agreement, or that the current government is illegitimate – it was elected into office by a very broad mandate from a democratically elected parliament and was the result of President Yanukovich fleeing the scene.

Last point – aggression, intervention, who's responsible for violence: From where we sit, there is no way to justify a deployment of some six-to-eight thousand troops, all across the Crimean Peninsula, effectively taking operational control of all of the ground of Crimea, including ground troops, airborne troops, tanks. There was no situation on the ground anywhere in Ukraine to justify unilateral military action of this kind. Once you go down the road as an OSCE State of asking your parliament to justify military intervention in anybody else's country, where does it end?

So, from that perspective, I would like to again reiterate our call that we end this here – that Russia roll back its occupation of Crimea and avail itself of the opportunity to have any concerns it may have with regard to the situation in Ukraine addressed through direct mediation with the government of Ukraine, which all of us would be prepared to support, and/or by taking advantage of international tools like those available in this institution and in the UN.

In my opening intervention, I neglected to mention one key tool that the OSCE has, which is the opportunity to assist Ukrainian authorities – and they have already requested this – with demobilization of irregular forces on the streets of Ukraine and the collecting of weapons. That's an additional tool that this organization has available.

Thank you.

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Related Sites:

[State's Nuland at OSCE Special Meeting on Ukraine](#) (03-03-2014)

[Briefing by State's Nuland After OSCE Special Meeting on Ukraine](#) (03-03-2014)

### **3. Obama, Israel's Prime Minister on Middle East, Ukraine (03-03-2014)**

*Remarks by President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu before bilateral meeting*

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Well, it's a pleasure to welcome once again Prime Minister Netanyahu to the Oval Office. There's nobody I've met with more or consulted with more than Bibi. And it's a testimony to the incredible bond between our two nations. I've said before and I will repeat, we do not have a closer friend or ally than Israel and the bond between our two countries and our two peoples is unbreakable.

And that's the reason why on a whole spectrum of issues we consult closely; we have the kind of military, intelligence and security cooperation that is unprecedented. And there is a strong bipartisan commitment in this country to make sure that Israel's security is preserved in any contingency.

We're going to have a wide range of issues, obviously, to discuss given what's happening on the world stage and the Middle East, in particular. So we'll spend some time discussing the situation in Syria and the need for us to not only find a political solution to the tragic situation there, but also to address growing extremism inside of Syria, the spillover effects on Lebanon and Jordan, in particular.

We'll have an opportunity to discuss the work that we do in counterterrorism and the work that we are going to be continuing to do to try to stabilize an environment that has become very dangerous in many respects.

We'll also have a chance to talk about Egypt, a country that obviously is of critical importance and where we have the opportunity, I think, to move beyond recent events over the last several years to a point in which once again there is a legitimate path towards political transition inside of Egypt. And that's important to Israel's security as well as to U.S. security.

We're going to be talking about Iran and my absolute commitment to make sure that Iran does not have a nuclear weapon -- something that I know the Prime Minister feels very deeply about. And we will discuss how the Joint Plan of Action that is currently in place can potentially at least lead to a solution that ensures that Iran is not developing a nuclear weapon.

And we'll spend time talking about the prospects of peace between Israelis and Palestinians. I want to commend publicly the efforts that Prime Minister Netanyahu had made in very lengthy and painstaking negotiations with my Secretary of State, John Kerry, Abu Mazen. They are tough negotiations. The issues are profound. Obviously if they were easy they would have been resolved many years ago. But I think that Prime Minister Netanyahu has approached these negotiations with a level of seriousness and commitment that reflects his leadership and the desire for the Israeli people for peace.

It's my belief that ultimately it is still possible to create two states, a Jewish state of Israel and a state of Palestine in which people are living side by side in peace and security. But it's difficult and it requires compromise on all sides. And I just want to publicly again commend the Prime Minister for the seriousness with which he's taken these discussions.

The timeframe that we have set up for completing these negotiations is coming near and some tough decisions are going to have to be made. But I know that, regardless of the outcome, the Prime

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Minister will make those decisions based on his absolute commitment to Israel's security and his recognition that ultimately Israel's security will be enhanced by peace with his neighbors.

So, Mr. Prime Minister, I want to welcome you again, and thank you again for your leadership and your friendship with the American people.

PRIME MINISTER NETANYAHU: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you today, especially since I know you've got a few other pressing matters on your plate. During the five years of your presidency, you and I, and Israel and the United States have worked very closely on critically important issues -- security, intelligence-sharing, missile defense -- and we're deeply grateful for that.

I look forward to working closely with you in the years ahead to address the main challenges that confront both our countries, and of these, the greatest challenge, undoubtedly, is to prevent Iran from acquiring the capacity to make nuclear weapons. I think that goal can be achieved if Iran is prevented from enriching uranium and dismantles fully its military nuclear installations.

Now, Mr. President, if that goal can be achieved peacefully and through diplomacy, I can tell you that no country has a greater stake in this than Israel. Because, as you know and I'm sure you'll appreciate, Iran calls openly for Israel's destruction, so I'm sure you'll appreciate that Israel cannot permit such a state to have the ability to make atomic bombs to achieve that goal. We just cannot be brought back again to the brink of destruction. And I, as the Prime Minister of Israel, will do whatever I must do to defend the Jewish state.

We're also going to discuss the peace process, as you said. I want to thank you and Secretary Kerry for when I say tireless efforts, I mean tireless efforts that he has put into this quest, as you are.

It's an opportunity to congratulate Secretary Kerry on the birth of his new granddaughter. Mr. Secretary, you may not be aware of this -- but the news of the new granddaughter came to Secretary Kerry while we were discussing the peace process. So we've had many productive meetings, but this is truly a productive meeting. (Laughter.) And so I thank you both for your efforts and your team's.

The 20 years that have passed since Israel entered the peace process have been marked by unprecedented steps that Israel has taken to advance peace. I mean, we vacated cities in Judea and Samaria. We left entirely Gaza. We've not only frozen settlements, we've uprooted entire settlements. We've released hundreds of terrorist prisoners, including dozens in recent months.

And when you look at what we got in return, it's been scores of suicide bombings, thousands of rockets on our cities fired from the areas we vacated, and just incessant Palestinian incitement against Israel. So Israel has been doing its part, and I regret to say that the Palestinians haven't.

Now, I know this flies in the face of conventional wisdom, but it's the truth. And the people of Israel know that it's the truth because they've been living it. What they want is peace. What we all want fervently is peace. Not a piece a paper -- although that, too -- but a real peace; a peace that is anchored in mutual recognition of two nation states that recognize and respect one another, and solid security arrangements on the ground.

Mr. President, you rightly said that Israel, the Jewish state, is the realization of the Jewish people's self-determination in our ancestral homeland. So the Palestinians expect us to recognize a

Palestinian state for the Palestinian people, a nation state for the Palestinian people. I think it's about time they recognize a nation state for the Jewish people. We've only been there for 4,000 years.

And I hope President Abbas does this, as I hope that he'll take seriously Israel's genuine security needs. Because, as you know and I think everybody does, in the Middle East, which is definitely the most turbulent and violent part of the Earth, the only peace that will endure is a peace that we can defend. And we've learned from our history -- Jewish history, but I think from general history -- that the best way to guarantee peace is to be strong. And that's what the people of Israel expect me to do -- to stand strong against criticism, against pressure, stand strong to secure the future of the one and only Jewish state.

And I think there is a partnership there, a partnership between Israel and America, that I think is important for this end. I want to thank you again for your friendship and your hospitality, and the warmth you've shown me on the snowy Washington day. I thank you. It's good to see you again.

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Thank you.

Q: The initial punishments that the U.S. is threatening against Russia for their advances into Ukraine don't seem to be having much of an effect. What leverage do you believe you have over President Putin at this point? And is the U.S. concerned primarily about getting Russian forces out of Crimea, or are you also concerned about Russian forces moving into parts of eastern Ukraine?

PRESIDENT OBAMA: All of the above. I spent the weekend talking to leaders across Europe, and I think the world is largely united in recognizing that the steps Russia has taken are a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty, Ukraine's territorial integrity; that they're a violation of international law; they're a violation of previous agreements that Russia has made with respect to how it treats and respects its neighbors. And, as a consequence, we got strong statements from NATO, from the G7, condemning the actions that Russia has taken. And we are going to continue these diplomatic efforts during the course of this week.

My interest is seeing the Ukrainian people be able to determine their own destiny. Russia has strong historic ties to the Ukraine. There are a lot of Russian nationals inside of Ukraine as well as native Russians, as there are a lot of Ukrainians inside of Russia. There are strong commercial ties between those two countries. And so all of those interests I think can be recognized. But what cannot be done is for Russia, with impunity, to put its soldiers on the ground and violate basic principles that are recognized around the world.

And I think the strong condemnation that it's received from countries around the world indicates the degree to which Russia is on the wrong side of history on this.

We are strongly supportive of the interim Ukrainian government. John Kerry is going to be traveling to Kyiv to indicate our support for the Ukrainian people, to offer very specific and concrete packages of economic aid -- because one of the things we're concerned about is stabilizing the economy even in the midst of this crisis. And what we are also indicating to the Russians is that if, in fact, they continue on the current trajectory that they're on, that we are examining a whole series of steps -- economic, diplomatic -- that will isolate Russia and will have a negative impact on Russia's economy and its status in the world.

We've already suspended preparations for the G8 summit. I think you can expect that there would be further follow-up on that. We are taking a look a whole range of issues that John Kerry mentioned yesterday.

And the question for Mr. Putin, who I spoke to directly, and the question for the Russian government generally is if, in fact, their concern is that the rights of all Ukrainians are respected, if, in fact, their primary concern, as they've stated, is that Russian speakers and Russian nationals are not in any way harmed or abused or discriminated against, then we should be able to set up international monitors and an international effort that mediates between various parties, that is able to broker a deal that is satisfactory to the Ukrainian people -- not to the United States, not to Russia, but to the Ukrainian people -- and we should be able to deescalate the situation.

And so we've been very specific with the Russians about how that might be done under the auspices of either the United States or the OSCE, or some other international organization. And John Kerry will pursue that further when he arrives.

And so there are really two paths that Russia can take at this point. Obviously, the facts on the ground in Crimea are deeply troubling and Russia has a large army that borders Ukraine. But what is also true is that over time this will be a costly proposition for Russia. And now is the time for them to consider whether they can serve their interests in a way that resorts to diplomacy as opposed to force.

One last point I would make on this: I've heard a lot of talk from Congress about what should be done, what they want to do. One thing they can do right away is to work with the administration to help provide a package of assistance to the Ukrainians, to the people and that government. And when they get back in, assuming the weather clears, I would hope that that would be the first order of business. Because at this stage there should be unanimity among Democrats and Republicans that when it comes to preserving the principle that no country has the right to send in troops to another country unprovoked, we should be able to come up with a unified position that stands outside of partisan politics. And my expectation is, is that I'll be able to get Congress to work with us in order to achieve that goal.

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#### **4. Ambassador Power's Rejection of Russian Rationale for Action in Ukraine** **(03-03-2014)**

*Remarks by Ambassador Samantha Power, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, at a UN Security Council Meeting on Ukraine*

Thank you Madam President. Listening to the representative of Russia, one might think that Moscow had just become the rapid response arm of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. So many of the assertions made this afternoon by the Russian Federation are without basis in reality.

Let's begin with a clear and candid assessment of the facts.

It is a fact that Russian military forces have taken over Ukrainian border posts. It is a fact that Russia has taken over the ferry terminal in Kerch. It is a fact that Russian ships are moving in and around Sevastapol. It is a fact that Russian forces are blocking mobile telephone services in some areas. It is a fact that Russia has surrounded or taken over practically all Ukrainian military facilities in Crimea. It is a fact that today Russian jets entered Ukrainian airspace. It is also a fact that independent journalists continue to report that there is no evidence of violence against Russian or pro-Russian communities.

Russian military action is not a human rights protection mission. It is a violation of international law and a violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the independent nation of Ukraine, and a breach of Russia's Helsinki Commitments and its UN obligations.

The central issue is whether the recent change of government in Ukraine constitutes a danger to Russia's legitimate interests of such a nature and extent that Russia is justified in intervening militarily in Ukraine, seizing control of public facilities, and issuing military ultimatums to elements of the Ukrainian military. The answer, of course, is no. Russian military bases in Ukraine are secure. The new government in Kyiv has pledged to honor all of its existing international agreements, including those covering Russian bases. Russian mobilization is a response to an imaginary threat.

A second issue is whether the population of the Crimea or other parts of eastern Ukraine, are at risk because of the new government. There is no evidence of this. Military action cannot be justified on the basis of threats that haven't been made and aren't being carried out. There is no evidence, for example, that churches in Eastern Ukraine are being or will be attacked; the allegation is without basis. There is no evidence that ethnic Russians are in danger. On the contrary, the new Ukrainian government has placed a priority on internal reconciliation and political inclusivity. President Turchinov – the acting President – has made clear his opposition to any restriction on the use of the Russian tongue.

No one has to explain to Ukraine's new government the need to have open communications, not only with leaders of the country's Russian ethnic minority in the Crimea and elsewhere, but also with its neighbors. That is why, when the current crisis began, the government sent its former Chief of Defense to the region to try to defuse the situation. A second emissary was prevented from entering the Crimean Rada to engage in discussions. And it is why Ukrainian authorities have repeatedly reached out to Russia. Russia needs to reciprocate and begin to engage directly with the Government of Ukraine.

I note that Russia has implied a right to take military action in the Crimea if invited to do so by the prime minister of Crimea. As the Government of Russia well knows, this has no legal basis. The prohibition on the use of force would be rendered moot were sub-national authorities able to unilaterally invite military intervention by a neighboring state. Under the Ukrainian constitution, only the Ukrainian Rada can approve the presence of foreign troops.

If we are concerned about the rights of Russian-speaking minorities, the United States is prepared to work with Russia and this Council to protect them. We have proposed and wholeheartedly support the immediate deployment of international observers and monitors from the UN or OSCE to ensure that the people about whom Russia expresses such concern are protected from abuse and to elucidate for the world the facts on the ground. The solution to this crisis is not difficult to envision. There is a way out. And that is through direct and immediate dialogue by Russia with the Government of Ukraine, the immediate pull-back of Russia's military forces, the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity, and the urgent deployment of observers and human rights monitors, not through more threats and more distortions.

Tonight the OSCE will begin deploying monitors to Ukraine. These monitors can provide neutral and needed assessments of the situation on the ground. Their presence is urgently necessary in Crimea and in key cities in eastern Ukraine. The United States calls upon Russia to ensure that their access is not impeded.

The leadership in Moscow may well be unhappy about former President Yanukovich's decision to flee Ukraine and move in with them. Russia may be displeased with the new government, which

was approved by Ukraine's parliament by an overwhelming majority, including members of Yanukovich's own party. Russia has every right to wish that events in Ukraine had turned out differently, but it does not have the right to express that unhappiness by using military force or by trying to convince the world community that up is down and black is white. Russia's calls to turn back time to implement the February 21 Agreement ring hollow. It was Yanukovich who failed to abide by the terms of that agreement, fleeing Kyiv, and ultimately Ukraine.

The United States categorically rejects the notion that the new Government of Ukraine is a "government of victors." It is a government of the people and it is one that intends to shepherd the country toward democratic elections on May 25th – elections that would allow Ukrainians who would prefer different leadership to have their views heard. And the United States will stand strongly and proudly with the people of Ukraine as they chart out their own destiny, their own government, their own future.

The bottom line is that, for all of the self-serving rhetoric we have heard from Russian officials in recent days, there is nothing that justifies Russian conduct. As I said in our last session, Russia's actions speak much louder than its words. What is happening today is not a human rights protection mission and it is not a consensual intervention. What is happening today is a dangerous military intervention in Ukraine. It is an act of aggression. It must stop. This is a choice for Russia. Diplomacy can serve Russia's interests. The world is speaking out against the use of military threats and the use of force. Ukrainians must be allowed to determine their own destiny. Thank you Madam President.

Related Sites:

[Remarks by Ambassador Samantha Power](#), U.S. Permanent Representative to the UN (03-01-2014)

[Ambassador Power on U.S. Support for Ukraine's Territorial Integrity](#) (03-03-2014)

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## **5. Hagel Discusses Ukraine, Budget on 'Face the Nation' (03-02-2014)**

By Amaani Lyle  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Mar. 2, 2014 – Appearing on CBS' "Face the Nation" today, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel urged a diplomatic approach to resolve what he described as a "dangerous situation" in Ukraine.

The secretary explained the Defense Department's strategic interest in Ukraine upon his recent return from a NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels where he saw strong support for the beleaguered nation.

"This is a time for careful, wise, steady leadership," Hagel told "Face the Nation" host Bob Schieffer. "The tensions increase and I think all nations have to be very careful here of not promoting any more tension through provocative action."

Following a Ukrainian pro-democracy coalition's recent ouster of Ukraine's pro-Russian government, the Russian military has been reported to be operating in and around the Crimea region in southeastern Ukraine, where the Russian Navy's Black Sea Fleet has its principal base in Sevastopol on the Black Sea. The Crimea region is home to an ethnic-Russian majority populace.

Hagel emphasized that diplomacy would be the appropriate path to support the Ukraine, which he called a sovereign, independent nation.

“They have been a responsible, new independent member of the global community since the implosion of the Soviet Union,” Hagel said of Ukraine. “We have European Union and NATO interests that border Ukraine and these are people who want to be free, who deserve to be free.”

Following today’s meeting in Brussels of NATO’s North Atlantic Council the council condemned the Russian Federation’s military escalation in Crimea and expressed its grave concern regarding the authorization by the Russian Parliament to use the armed forces of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine, according to a NATO news release.

“Military action against Ukraine by forces of the Russian Federation is a breach of international law and contravenes the principles of the NATO-Russia Council and the Partnership for Peace,” the NATO release added. “Russia must respect its obligations under the United Nations Charter and the spirit and principles of the OSCE, on which peace and stability in Europe rest. We call on Russia to de-escalate tensions.”

Russian military escalation of the situation in Ukraine “would set in motion so many different dynamics that are not in anyone’s interest,” Hagel said.

Turning to another subject, the secretary noted the Defense Department’s need to adjust to a more dangerous and complicated world, including the cyber threat.

“Not unlike every war the United States has been in, you reset your posture ... your assets ... your whole enterprise based on the new reality and based on preparing an institution for the challenges of the future,” Hagel said. “We’ve increased cyber assets ... special operations ... we’re focusing on readiness, capability, capacity ... our ability to do the things we need to do in the ... interests of the strategic guidance President Barack Obama laid out in 2012.”

But, Hagel acknowledged that security threats to the United States continue to exist and shift, leaving little room for complacency.

“Five years ago,” he said, “there wasn’t the same focus or reality of what a cyber attack could do to this country ... how it could paralyze this country, bring our economy down without any nation firing a shot.”

And, the threat of terrorism remains and will persist into the future, Hagel said. Yet, while the requirement to defend the nation remains, the methods employed to do so are influenced by today’s budgetary realities and changing technology, he added.

“The fiscal constraints that are being placed on the Pentagon to make very tough choices here are very significant,” Hagel said.

He addressed accusations of balancing the budget on the “backs of those who have fought in war.”

“This isn’t just an arbitrary unilateral approach to try and slow the growth just to slow the growth,” Hagel said. “We’ve got to look at the long-term commitments to our people.”

Hagel noted that half of the DOD budget pays for compensation, retirement and medical care, which will increase significantly.

“We’re not cutting. We’re proposing slowing growth in certain areas,” Hagel said. “We think this is responsible. We don’t think it breaks faith with our people, but we have to reposition and I’ve got to be able to keep a modern military.”

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## **6. Secretary Kerry on the Situation in Ukraine (03-01-2014)**

The United States condemns the Russian Federation's invasion and occupation of Ukrainian territory, and its violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity in full contravention of Russia's obligations under the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, its 1997 military basing agreement with Ukraine, and the 1994 Budapest Memorandum. This action is a threat to the peace and security of Ukraine, and the wider region.

I spoke with President Turchynov this morning to assure him he had the strong support of the United States and commend the new government for showing the utmost restraint in the face of the clear and present danger to the integrity of their state, and the assaults on their sovereignty. We also urge that the Government of Ukraine continue to make clear, as it has from throughout this crisis, its commitment to protect the rights of all Ukrainians and uphold its international obligations.

As President Obama has said, we call for Russia to withdraw its forces back to bases, refrain from interference elsewhere in Ukraine, and support international mediation to address any legitimate issues regarding the protection of minority rights or security.

From day one, we've made clear that we recognize and respect Russia's ties to Ukraine and its concerns about treatment of ethnic Russians. But these concerns can and must be addressed in a way that does not violate Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, by directly engaging the Government of Ukraine.

Unless immediate and concrete steps are taken by Russia to deescalate tensions, the effect on U.S.-Russian relations and on Russia's international standing will be profound.

I convened a call this afternoon with my counterparts from around the world, to coordinate on next steps. We were unified in our assessment and will work closely together to support Ukraine and its people at this historic hour.

In the coming days, emergency consultations will commence in the UN Security Council, the North Atlantic Council, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in defense of the underlying principles critical to the maintenance of international peace and security. We continue to believe in the importance of an international presence from the UN or OSCE to gather facts, monitor for violations or abuses and help protect rights. As a leading member of both organizations, Russia can actively participate and make sure its interests are taken into account.

The people of Ukraine want nothing more than the right to define their own future – peacefully, politically and in stability. They must have the international community’s full support at this vital moment. The United States stands with them, as we have for 22 years, in seeing their rights restored.

Related Sites:

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[Briefing on the Situation in Ukraine](#)

[G7 Leaders' Statement on Ukraine](#)

[President Obama's Remarks on Ukraine](#)

[Secretary Kerry on the Situation in Ukraine](#)

[North Atlantic Council Statement on Situation in Ukraine](#)

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## **7. Human Rights Depend on Courageous Individuals, Kerry Says (02-27-2014)**

By Jane Morse  
Staff Writer

Washington — “Some of the greatest accomplishments in expanding the cause of human rights have come not because of legislative decree or judicial fiat, but they came through the awesomely courageous acts of individuals,” says Secretary of State John Kerry.

In comments made February 27 upon the release of the 2013 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Kerry said that “the fundamental struggle for dignity, for decency in the treatment of human beings between each other and between states and citizens, is a driving force in all of human history.”

The reports — now in their 38th year — document human rights violations and abuses in almost 200 distinct countries and territories. Based on input from U.S. embassies, human rights activists, nongovernmental organizations and other sources, the country reports are mandated by the U.S. Congress to help guide U.S. government policy and foreign assistance. The reports also serve as a reference for other governments, international institutions, nongovernmental organizations, legal professionals, scholars, interested citizens and journalists.

“We know that we're not perfect,” Kerry said of human rights in the United States. “We don't speak with any arrogance whatsoever, but with a concern for the human condition. Our own journey has not been without great difficulty and, at times, contradiction. But even as we remain humble about the challenges of our own history, we are proud that no country has more opportunity to advance the cause of democracy and no country is as committed to the cause of human rights as we are.”

The annual human rights report, Kerry emphasized, “is not just some high-minded exercise. This is the most comprehensive, authoritative, dispassionate and factual review of the state of human rights globally, and every American should be proud of it.”

With the latest reports, which cover 2013, the United States joins with many other nations in reaffirming its commitment “to a world where speaking one's mind does not lead to prosecution and where professing one's love does not lead to persecution, a world where practicing or changing one's faith does not lead to imprisonment and where marching peacefully in the street does not get you beaten up in a blind alley or even killed in plain sight,” Kerry said.

According to a State Department fact sheet released along with the reports, the most noteworthy human rights developments in 2013 were:

- Increased crackdowns by governments on civil society and restrictions on the freedoms of association and assembly.
- Restrictions by governments on freedom of speech and press freedom.
- Abuses by government security forces that engaged with impunity in unlawful arrests and extrajudicial killings.
- Lack of effective labor rights protections.
- The continued marginalization of vulnerable groups, including religious and ethnic minorities, women and children, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons, and persons with disabilities.

The full reports for each country are available at the [State.gov](#) and [HumanRights.gov](#) websites.

Related Sites:

[Kerry on Annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#)  
[State Dept. Briefing on Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#)  
[State Dept. Fact Sheet on 2013 Country Reports on Human Rights](#)

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## **8. Syria Slow in Meeting Obligations, DOD Spokesman Says (02-27-2014)**

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 27, 2014 – Chemical materials designated for destruction are slowly being transported for consolidation at the Syrian port of Latakia, and the United States is urging the Syrian government to accelerate this process, Defense Department spokesman Army Col. Steven Warren told reporters here today.

The U.S. vessel MV Cape Ray has been specially fitted to accommodate destruction of the Syrian chemical materials, and it arrived Feb. 13 in Rota, Spain, to stand by for the mission.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons announced yesterday that the Syrian government had transported a fourth shipment of chemical materials to Latakia, Warren said. This shipment contained sulfur mustard, he added.

“Of note,” Warren said, “the materials in this shipment are the first which will ultimately be transloaded to the Cape Ray for follow-on destruction.”

The United States continues to urge the Syrian government to meet its obligation and accelerate efforts to deliver the entire declared stockpile to Latakia for transportation and destruction, Warren said. The plan for transloading the chemical weapons onto the Cape Ray, he added, further increase the need for Syria hasten its efforts.

“The plan is that there will be one transload onto the Cape Ray,” he said. “So we have to wait until all the chemicals are out of Syria and on the Danish or Norwegian ships. They’ll then be moved onto the Cape Ray ... and then be destroyed. We are calling on the Syrians to accelerate their movement of these chemical weapons into the port of Latakia so we can get them all onto the Danish and Norwegian ships and transload them onto the Cape Ray.”

The Syrians, he noted, have obligations that they need to live up to. “These are international obligations, and I know they’ve submitted a plan for a 100-day long extension, and we find that unacceptable,” Warren said. “They have to live up to their obligation. They have to get those chemical weapons out of the country so we can destroy them.”

The DOD spokesman also provided observations on North Korean missile tests conducted yesterday, and the situation in Ukraine.

North Korea launched several short-range scud missiles late last night, Warren said. They impacted off North Korea’s east coast and didn’t appear to target anyone, he added.

“We view this as an unannounced weapons test we see somewhat regularly,” Warren said, noting two to four missiles were launched.

Meanwhile, Warren said, officials are monitoring developments in Ukraine closely. He affirmed America’s strong support for Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty.

“We expect other nations to respect Ukraine’s sovereignty and avoid provocative actions,” Warren said. “We expect Russia to be transparent about its activities, particularly its recently announced training exercise. We urge them not to take any steps that could be misinterpreted or lead to miscalculation during this delicate time.”

Related Sites:

[Special Report: MV Cape Ray](#)

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